# The PULPIT

*A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching*

OCTOBER, 1950


## Prayer of Praise

GOD of the open, of dawning and starlight,
Of the sea's blue, the sun's gold, the clouds' varied pageant;
God of mountains and forests and rich, waving grasses;
Of April's fresh beauty and autumn's deep crooning;
Of the snow blast, the night wind,
The tempest, life-laden;
God of light, God of grandeur,
We adore Thee.

God of the spirit of man, emerging,
Warring against the shackles of darkness;
God of strength, of freedom, of hope everlasting;
God of history, of science, of music symphonic;
God of all Christ-souls of all ages and peoples,
Fulfilling the past, transcending the present,
Insurgent, exulting, with eyes to the eastward;
God of truth, God of progress,
We extol Thee.

God of our hearts, Father of mercy,
Pitying, loving, craving affection;
God sacrificial, Calvary-proven;
Sun of all life, star of all peoples,
Warming, enlightening, cheering and luring;
God of humanity, God of compassion,
Father of Christ who died for our saving,
We love Thee.

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

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*Twenty-First Anniversary Issue*

The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*
Garland Evans Hopkins, *Managing Editor*

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## Pulpit Calendar

Oct. 1—Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Worldwide Communion Sunday.
Oct. 8—Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost.
Oct. 9—Thanksgiving Day (Canada).
Oct. 12—Columbus Day.
Oct. 15—Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.
Oct. 16-24—United Nations Week.
Oct. 22—Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost; World Order Sunday.
Oct. 24—United Nations Day.
Oct. 29—Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost; Reformation Sunday; World Temperance Day.
Oct. 31—Reformation Day.
Nov. 1—All Saints' Day.
Nov. 2—All Souls' Day.
Nov. 5—Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 11—Armistice Day.
Nov. 12—Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 19—Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost; Thanksgiving Sunday.
Nov. 23—Thanksgiving Day.
Nov. 26—Sunday before Advent; Stewardship Day.
Dec. 3—Advent Sunday; Day of Dedication and Prayer celebrating the creation of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
Dec. 4-12—Hanukah (Jewish).
Dec. 10—Second Sunday in Advent; Universal Bible Sunday.
Dec. 17—Third Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 24—Sunday before Christmas; Christmas Eve.

SEASONS: Kingdomtide and Advent.
ALTAR COLORS: Kingdomtide, green; All Saints, white; Advent to Christmas Eve, violet; Christmas to the Octave of Epiphany, white.

## For the Record—

Today The Pulpit comes of age! For twenty-one years it has found its way into the studies of preachers all over the world. Many of you who receive this issue have been subscribers since that first mailing in September 1929. And not a few of you still have every issue since that first one carefully bound and at your fingertips. Thousands of others have become subscribers in the intervening years. We believe that both the old-timers and the more recent additions to the Pulpit family will enjoy this anniversary issue. In it are five sermons by preachers whose sermons appeared in our first volume and who have stood by us in the years since then.

The first issue of The Pulpit was dated October 1929. In preparing this anniversary issue, our first thought was to have sermons by preachers who contributed to that issue. But time has taken its toll. Only one of them is still living. In that first issue seven of Christendom's most representative leaders inaugurated the new journal. Charles E. Jefferson preached on "A Surprising Question—a Disappointing Answer"; Frederick W. Norwood (City Temple, London), on "If They Should Be Written Everyone"; Merton S. Rice, on "The Divine Pledge"; Harry Emerson Fosdick, on "If Jesus Were a Modernist"; Joseph Fort Newton, on "The Sermon"; S. Parkes Cadman, on "Christ and Caesar"; and Charles P. Anderson, on "Religion and Life." Other long to be remembered names found in the succeeding issues of that first volume include Robert E. Speer, Rufus M. Jones, James I. Vance, Ernest Fremont Tittle, Peter Ainslie, William F. McDowell, Edwin Holt Hughes, George Craig Stewart. And there are many others, men who were young then, who continue to be heard in our columns. These are the men who created The Pulpit tradition.

On the cover page of this anniversary issue is a poem by another who has contributed greatly in building that tradition. Thomas Curtis Clark was associated with Dr. Morrison as managing editor of The Pulpit from its first issue until his retirement in 1948. His hand was in the fashioning of that first volume and in every copy of the magazine from then until now. For though he is nominally retired (Harpers and Abingdon-Cokesbury announcements belie the fact), he still is near enough to respond to calls for help which have been directed his way by his successors. He also continues to select the poetry which appears in these pages. We asked him to select one of his own poems for this issue. After some persuasion he sent "Prayer of Praise," saying that if only one of his poems might survive he would prefer that this be the one. G. E. H.

VOLUME XXI
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# THE PULPIT

CHICAGO
OCTOBER, 1950

# THE EDITOR'S PAGE

## The Event of the Month

TWENTY-ONE years ago the first issue of The Pulpit was published. Our readers will not think it amiss if the celebration of our coming of age is taken as *the* event of this month. Five preachers who appeared in our columns during our first year have contributed the sermons in this our anniversary issue. During these years I have written "The Editor's Page" 12 x 21 = 252 times—not missing a single issue. Now that Garland Evans Hopkins has come on as managing editor, we are about to begin a new era. Indeed, our readers have been telling us for the past six months that the new era has already begun. They sense a new life in our pages. But you ain't seen nuttin' yet! Mr. Hopkins is projecting plans for improvements that I had not dreamed of. Indeed, I thought The Pulpit couldn't be improved! But it will appear in January enlarged from 24 to 32 pages, with a new type dress and several new features. In addition to the sermons, The Pulpit will henceforth carry articles on preaching and the preacher's work. I am sure the new "Pulpit Post" department will be taken advantage of by our readers to make appreciative or critical comments on sermons, articles or "The Editor's Page." We rejoice in the great service this "periodical of contemporary preaching" has rendered in the past, and dare to hope that its circulation will be doubled in the year ahead.

**The Pulpit Attains Its Majority!**

## The Book of the Month

CHURCH AND STATE IN THE UNITED STATES. *By Anson Phelps Stokes. Three volumes, 2761 pages. Harper, $25.00.*

NO, THERE is no irony in my recommendation of this twenty-five dollar book for preachers. Not many of you can afford to possess it. I received my three volumes from the quarterly journal *Theology Today,* with the request for a 5,000-word article which I have just now sent off. But these volumes can be made available to everyone who is in reach of a public or college library. The importance of Dr. Stokes' magnificent achievement prompts me to urge Pulpit readers to take steps to get this work into some library where it can be used by everyone interested. And every minister had better be interested! The issues arising in connection with the separation of church and state have become acute in our time, after a century and a half during which public opinion comfortably assumed that the principle of separation embodied in our Constitution was well understood and firmly established. The subject has come alive because of (1) Roman Catholic encroachments upon the public school system, together with a bold challenge by the hierarchy of the separation principle itself; (2) the defiance of the Constitution by the presidential appointment of an ambassador to the pope, together with the possibility that a successor to Myron C. Taylor may be appointed; and (3) the unwitting misstep of Protestant churches in the "released time" adventure. These volumes constitute a monumental source of historical and documentary information on church and state. By hook or crook (I mean some Christian crook!) get these books into a library where you can get your hands on them!

## A Thought for the Month

THE MOTIVE for church union is a double one—to give Jesus Christ a body that is worthy of his Lordship, and to give the individual Christian a church which, under Christ, is worthy of his wholehearted allegiance. A united church would enrich and deepen the spiritual life of every member. The Christian cannot attain his full stature in Christ in a sectarian fragment of the church. In a united church his consciousness of belonging to the whole body of Christ will supersede the narrowing loyalty of a denominational allegiance. The glory of the worldwide mission of such a church and the depths of its richer fellowship will be reflected in the soul of every believer. His commitment to Christ will be invested with a dignity, a sense of reality, of meaning and of certain triumph which the provincialism and parochialism of his present denomination cannot evoke. Thus the attainment of a united church will actually produce a new kind of Christian! Those who, however sincerely, insist that a united church must wait until we have some profound change in the spiritual life of Protestantism are, it seems to me, unrealistic. It is doubtful that there will ever be any more spiritual vitality in our denominational churches than now exists. Modern Christians have already reached the maximum of spirituality in a system which is in process of decay. High-pressure methods of producing an emotional type of spirituality or piety have long since worn themselves out. Their apparent successes are largely illusory, ephemeral and barren. It is vain to expect a "great awakening" in Protestantism until we give to Christ the church which he deserves, for which he prayed and for whose life he died. What wonders he would work in and through such a church no tongue can tell.

**The Christian in a United Church**

Charles Clayton Morrison

# The Mantle of Charity

By EDGAR DeWITT JONES

*And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.* Gen. 9:20-23

I DO not recall having heard or read a sermon based on this Old Testament incident. I readily agree with the fastidious that this is not a decorous scene to look upon. Drunkenness never is pleasant to behold. A man deep in his cups is often an object to move angels to tears, if angels ever weep. There is a story of a proud man who once boasted that he had never committed certain major sins, three in number. Then he got drunk and, his mind maddened by alcohol, he committed all three. Shakespeare, in his tragedy of *Othello*, makes Cassio say: "O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains."

The one factor in this sorry scene from Genesis which lifts it out of grossness and invests it with decency is the deed of Noah's sons in taking a garment and walking backward with averted eyes, and covering the naked body of their father as he lay sprawled out in a drunken stupor.

I

The mantle of charity is not often in evidence in the Old Testament. That literature is starkly realistic. If we of today were writing about Abraham, Jacob and David, we would gloss over certain wrongdoings of which they were guilty, or omit them altogether. But the chroniclers of the Old Testament told the truth about their heroes, shocking though it sometimes was.

In the portrayal of human frailties the New Testament differs from the Old. Not that the New glosses over wrongdoing—not at all. The deadly wages of sin is set down, and the dire consequences of evil traced "in characters indelible and known." Still, as a rule, the climate of the New Testament is gentler and more favorable to justice tempered with mercy than the Old. But of this, more later on.

Like the quality of mercy, the ministry of the mantle of charity is twice blest. It blesses him who gives and him who takes. In truth, the mantling of charity about the human frailties of others is itself a mark of mercy—is love in action. Old Diogenes is pictured going about with a lantern looking for an honest man. He could have found that kind of man without a lantern had he looked in the right place. But Diogenes even with his lantern could not have found a faultless person. No more can we, though we may turn a powerful searchlight on humanity.

Imagine what would happen if human beings spoke in public their opinions and criticisms of one another which they speak guardedly in private, or the uncharitable thoughts they cherish but do not put in words. Imagine the consequences! Families would disintegrate, churches become discordant and in turmoil, communities belligerent and embroiled in strife. Why, life would be unendurable. It is the understanding heart, the tempered spirit, the guarded tongue, the love that "thinketh no evil," which hold the family together, unify the church and save the community and the state from dissolution.

Take a close-up view of our heroes, not for the purpose of "debunking" (how I dislike this word! But it is in the dictionaries and its meaning familiar to us all). Some of our heroes had feet of clay, and all of them, being human, had faults and weaknesses. So far as our truly great are involved, their frailties were as spots on a glorious sun. It may be that this fact brings them closer to us and makes us love them all the more.

Look at Martin Luther. There he stands in history, a titanic figure. We owe him much. He set on foot human liberations that shook the world. Our democracy as well as our Protestantism is in unpayable debt to this sturdy German who faced alone the powers of church and state. Yet he had his faults. He sometimes threw wild words around carelessly. He was obstinate and not always easy to work with. The one big blot on his escutcheon is his failure to side with the poor and disinherited in the Peasants' War, choosing rather to stand with the powerful, the nobles, and on the side of the highly placed. Yet we throw the mantle of charity over Luther's mistakes. His virtues and his accomplishments far outnumber and outweigh his weaknesses. We have to take our public men as we find them, and if they are honest and faithful to the larger tasks, we forget and forgive their minor faults.

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*EDGAR DeWITT JONES is the emeritus pastor of Central Woodward Church, Detroit, Mich. Born in Texas, he studied law before deciding to go into the ministry. At different times he has served as president of the International Disciples Convention, the Federal Council of Churches and Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity. Seven colleges and universities have conferred doctorates upon him.*

And there is Lincoln. Now and then somebody wonders if we have not deified him. No, that were not possible. He was too human, too much of the earth earthy. He was not a demigod. He had his weaknesses, his frailties. They were known to his friends. They were better known to himself. But what trivial foibles they were, what mere peccadilloes! And who cares to recall them save to show the great human being Lincoln was!

And what of Franklin D. Roosevelt? It may require two generations before his ministrations to a broken world and his measures to better the condition of the underprivileged can be justly weighed and fairly appraised. Not until those who idolized him and those who hated him have passed from off the earthly scene can justice be done the man and his works. Time may have its way with him as it has had with Jefferson, Jackson, Cleveland and other embattled Presidents. For the present the mantle of charity should be ample enough to cover the ambivalence of F.D.R. and likewise the animosity of his detractors.

There was once a famous American statesman whose political life was embattled, and he missed the grand prize—the presidency. In his later years, in conversation with a young newspaperman who had come to interview him, he took the reporter to a window overlooking a wooded park. "See the trees," he said, "how beautiful they look from here; but if you examine them closely you will find ugly knots, broken branches and dead limbs. So it is with men in public life. Better look at them from a distance, and credit them for what they have done, and forget their faults and frailties." There is something in this. The mantle of charity is in the picture that statesman drew.

## II

Not only is it necessary to walk backward and spread the mantle of charity over individuals; we are obliged to do likewise with movements, organizations, crafts and the world of business, professions and vocations in general. Unity of opinion and viewpoint do not anywhere exist in our democratic institutions; controversy and dissent are ever at work, without which progress would be impossible, although we deplore the methods and the manners which so often disturb and discourage us. The political world is nearly always in disruption, and presidential campaigns are nightmares four months long. Yet this is democracy at work. It is not working as smoothly and as righteously as we could wish, but it is working, and what is more, we work with it and vote as we choose. Over the excesses, puerilities, banalities and sometimes hypocrisies, we throw the mantle of charity, remembering that out of such strange and often uncouth methods we have discovered and put in office a Jackson, a Lincoln, a Cleveland. Fisher Ames, one of the founding fathers of our republic, was right: "A democracy is like a raft, hard to steer and your feet are always wet."

Coming closer home, behold my own beloved brotherhood, the Disciples of Christ! Born of a prayer for the unity of the churches, we are split among ourselves three ways. It would be easy to throw up our hands in despair and cry, "A plague on all three houses." But we do well to remember that the note of unity which our pulpits sounded almost alone for a century, has brought results. Now with few exceptions that note of unity is being sounded clear and strong by the major denominations. We have not lived in vain as a communion. Who knows but that the striking of this note of reunion in season and out of season had much to do with Amsterdam and the World Council of Churches? We have much to praise in our movement for the unity of the divided house of God; and over the divisions and controversies among our brethren we throw the mantle of charity, saying humbly, "To know all is to forgive all."

Forgiveness is the forgotten fundamental.

## III

It is time we turned to the New Testament where the climate is especially favorable to the mantle of charity, which is so often in beneficent use. One is embarrassed by the wealth of teaching, incident and illustration on the side of compassion, forgiveness, mercy without stint, which is found in this Christian literature. Only a few instances out of many are cited here—incidents so notable, so tender, so full of compassion, as should move the dullest heart.

The enemies of Jesus brought a woman taken in adultery into his presence, saying, "Master, in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such persons. What therefore dost thou say?" Now these accusers were not concerned about the morals of Jerusalem. They were eager to trap Jesus, confound him, and lessen his influence. Did they expect him to berate the woman and commend her accusers? If so they were due to have the surprise of their lives. Jesus stooped and wrote in the sand.

The episode was a brazen act on the part of her accusers. There was the woman, broken and harassed, at his feet. He stooped and silently wrote in the dust. They continued to ask him, "What are you going to do with this woman?" He raised himself up and said: "Let him that is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her." And again stooping down wrote on the ground. Hearing this unexpected reply, the accusers went away, one by one, beginning with the oldest. Jesus and the woman were left alone. He said to her, "Has no one condemned thee?" She answered: "No one, Lord." Then said Jesus: "Neither do I condemn thee. Go thy way and sin no more." Was ever the mantle of charity more gently draped over an erring human being?

> O Love Divine, that stooped to share
> Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear.

There is the case of Peter, who, in an hour of crisis both for his Master and for himself, denied that he was a follower of Jesus, denied that he even so much as knew him, and accompanied the denials with rude oaths, On the seashore the Christ came to Simon Peter and gave him the opportunity to confess him thrice in the memorable words, "Thou knowest I love thee." And

on the day of Pentecost it was none other than Simon Peter who was the spokesman, the preacher of the first Christian sermon ever delivered. Nor is there likelihood that any of his fellow Christians took him aside after the notable service he rendered that day to say in envy or downright meanness: "See here, Peter, don't you remember that you are the one who on a certain fateful night denied your Lord three times? Why, you even denied with an oath that you knew him." No, so far as we know nothing like that happened to dim the splendor of that day—the birthday of the church. His fellow Christians threw the mantle of charity about that shabby episode, and never referred to it again. Simon Peter, like many another erring disciple of our Lord, rose on "steppingstones of his dead self to higher things."

Then there was Judas, who betrayed his Lord. John in afteryears remembered that at the Last Supper, Jesus dipped the bread in the sop and gave it to him who had already bargained to sell his Master to the enemies. Now, for a host to dip the bread in the sop and hand it to a guest was to do that guest a signal honor, to choose him as the favored guest. By that gesture it was as though Jesus said to Judas: "You see I love you, Judas. Now can you do this thing to me? Judas, I love you." Was not this unprecedented courtesy a mantling of the would-be betrayer with a love that was reluctant to let him go on with the wicked bargain? For one, I think so. And at the bitter end, amid the shouts of derision and the jeers of those who willed that he should die upon the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Was ever so ineffable a mantle of charity divine flung over the madding mob that clamored for his blood?

The mantle of charity—what a theme! Who can do justice to it? It occurs to me that I have said but a little of the much that could be said on so vast and neglected a subject. But I hope I have said enough to soften the hard heart that is stubbornly set against justice, compassion, mercy and forgiveness.

# The One Hope

**By WILLIAM PIERSON MERRILL**

*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* Acts 4:12

THE announcement of that text might easily lead some of you to expect an old-fashioned evangelistic sermon. If so, please sit up and take notice.

One of the sources of the weakness of Christianity and the continuing misery of the world has been the limitation, on the part of so many Christians, of this mighty declaration to the narrow sphere of individual safety after death. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will have a passport to heaven," is an interpretation all too common of this tremendous declaration.

I am not objecting to the application of this great statement to the individual life. God forbid! It is only as individuals lay hold on it that it can begin to work on society at large. But I am objecting to the insidious danger of thinking that it is limited to that matter of individual assurance of good to come; that one can confess his faith in the Lord Jesus and then lie back in contented ease, saying, or singing,

> Nothing either great or small
> Remains for me to do;
> Jesus died and paid it all,
> Yes, all the debt I owe.

Jesus pay *all* the debt you owe? Did he ever say anything like that? Why, he was always reminding his disciples of what they owed to God and man, and how they could honestly discharge those obligations.

### *PERTINENT FACTS*

A fact we should never let slip from our consciousness, even for a moment, is that Jesus, according to the Gospels, spoke of "salvation" less than a dozen times, and in about half those cases meant by it physical healing; but that he spoke of the Kingdom of God more than 120 times, and meant by it all human society made into one great brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. He expressly told us that we must not be too deeply concerned over our personal welfare, but should assume that God our Father would take care of that if we did our real job of seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. Nor should we ever let slip out of our consciousness his final picture of the Great Judgment, where the eternal future of individuals and nations is clearly shown to depend, not on our professions of belief or attendance at religious services, important as those are, but on whether we have lived and served and acted in the spirit of our Lord, who used his life for the good of all people everywhere.

This text shines with a new radiance, almost blind-

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ing in its effect, in view of the new problems now confronting mankind—not only this strange matter of atomic energy, but all the other complex issues that divide our world and threaten its abiding peace. But to the truly thoughtful the main matter is not any of the immediate and outward problems. No! The deep, absolutely essential matter is how to bring about in all the world a spirit that can be trusted to use these new and mighty forces and all the powers of nature and politics and economics for good and not for evil. As in the beginning of things, so now, the tree in the midst of the garden is a tree of knowledge of good and evil. How can we make the fruit of that tree—science, we call it—work for good and not for evil? Once more the voice of God speaks to us, this time not to one small nation but to all mankind: "Behold, I have set before you this day life and death, blessing and cursing; wherefore choose life."

Of course it is well that capable minds should think about the immediate problems relating to the use of atomic energy, and should be deeply concerned about the present and future safety and welfare of our country. It is absolutely necessary to do our utmost to bring about the success of the United Nations, and to keep pressing the need for generous cooperation among the nations. But all that will come to little or nothing unless in and through it is the right spirit.

### *OUR CHALLENGE*

There is this to challenge us: that the more terrible war becomes, the more we may be driven to realize what we have dreamed of and planned for so ineffectively in the past; that the basic concern is not the banning of new and more terrible weapons of waging war, but the elimination from the life of the world of war itself. And we ought to know by this time that that tremendous task will never be accomplished by pacifism, nonresistance, individual abstinence from war, any more than smallpox or tuberculosis or any other dire scourge of mankind can be coped with successfully by personal avoidance of contact with it. We know what Jesus thought of those who "passed by on the other side." There may be a real lesson for those who would deal with the problem of war in the discovery that the cure for some of the most deadly diseases is not through avoidance but through inoculation.

Upon our present world, which is awakening to the unspeakable horrors of war, this text of ours begins to shine with new radiance. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." That is a word for all the world, not just for the individual; a cure for ills now, not just an escape from the fear of hell by and by.

Did you ever meditate on the fact that Jesus said so little about the future life? He assumed it; he told us not to worry about it; he gave a single lovely picture of it as our Father's house, with room for all his true children. But his main concern—we might almost dare to say his one great concern—was about life *now*: how this world might be delivered from its fears and ills and become truly "our Father's world." And he was willing to die for that cause.

One great principle is becoming more and more clear to men and women of vision: that the supreme need of the world is a general and strong spirit of good will, right dealing, justice, freedom, cooperation all through the life of mankind the world over. Without that solid basis, the most elaborate palaces of international order will be built on the sand and not on firm rock. Thoughtful men are coming to that idea more and more. Just after the flaming appearance of the atomic bomb, I attended a meeting of one of the outstanding bodies organized for the study of the conditions of lasting peace. The chairman greeted me with the words, "Now we shall have to deal with religion pure and undefiled." And he meant it. He is not a churchman; I doubt if he attends religious services very often. But he saw that at the basis of any and all lasting order and peace in the world is real religion.

What a time this is therefore for a manifestation on the part of Christians everywhere of the faith that in their Lord and Master, in his words, his life, his death, his resurrection, his spirit, himself, is the one hope of the world. Even professed unbelievers break out at times with expressions of something of that faith. I can never forget how that queer, unstable, brilliant man George Bernard Shaw, in his preface to "Androcles and the Lion," says: "I am no more a Christian than Pilate was, or you, gentle reader. And yet, like Pilate, I greatly prefer Jesus to Annas and Caiaphas; and I am ready to admit that after contemplating the world and human nature for nearly sixty years, I see no way out of the world's misery but the way which would have been found by Christ's will, if he had undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman."

### *NOW IS THE TIME*

What would it not mean all over the world, in its fear and unrest and need, if suddenly "all who profess and call themselves Christians" should begin to live *now* as Jesus said we ought to live—to think as he did and act as he did and show the spirit he showed. There would be results as startling and world-shaking as the repercussions of the atomic bomb. It would solve our major problems. Why, if all Christians in their many varieties should just agree on one single principle—not to count anything essential which Jesus did not think was important—church unity might be achieved almost overnight. Christianity is divided, held apart, over issues that meant little or nothing to him. He never mentioned his virgin birth, the inerrancy of the Scriptures or the historic episcopate. Yet many professing Christians, many church leaders, still insist that one or more of those three matters are essential. If all Christians everywhere lived in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount—really convinced that what we call the "Beatitudes" are not just sweet assurances but directions for life here and now, telling us that the true glory and value of life are found not by the proud but by the

humble, by those who face sorrow with trust in the comfort of God, by the self-forgetful as the true heirs of earthly good, by those who want righteousness as a hungry man wants food and a thirsty man water, by the kind and merciful, by those who keep their hearts pure, by those who are determined to make peace and not war the rule of the life of the world and will stand for that great ideal though they be persecuted for it—such Christians would be indeed the salt the world needs, the light without which it is lost in the dark.

How easily we say the Lord's Prayer, failing to catch its tremendous implications. A good friend of ours once spent the night in our home. At the breakfast table next morning, as is our custom, we joined in the Lord's Prayer. When we had finished I casually remarked, "How that simple prayer fits the needs of our time!" Our guest looked surprised and asked, "What do you mean?" I answered, " 'Our Father—Father of all men everywhere. 'Thy Kingdom come'—an ordered and peaceful and brotherly world, and that coming through the doing of God's will here 'as it is in heaven.' 'Daily bread'—freedom from want. A spirit of forgiveness and good will everywhere. Freedom from evil—war and other ills, and that through removal of the things that tempt us. And then the conclusion, 'Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory'—the three things that men and nations contend over, all seen as belonging to God, not to us." He said in surprise, "Why I never thought of that!" He is a faithful, earnest Christian, but he had never taken in the breadth and depth of that familiar prayer.

This then is the great question now, confronting everyone who calls himself a Christian: not whether he has a passport to heaven put away somewhere, but whether he wishes and resolves, with the help of God's grace, to live here on earth as Jesus said we should and showed us that we could.

Is any of that spirit in you, my friend? Have you come to see the folly, the pettiness, yes, the ungodliness, of taking your religion, your Christianity, simply as a lovely personal possession and not as a great challenge and opportunity to join with other souls in helping to make the world see that what it needs, what alone can save it, is what Jesus was and is, what he stood for though he died for it, and what he stands for now, "climbing up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back"—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever?

What a wonder it would be if you and I and all professing Christians should stand before the world of our time as Peter and John stood before the authorities of their time and place, to declare, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," and to stand by that faith at any cost, as he and his companions did. Do you recall the conclusion of the prayer those early Christians sent up to God when Peter and John came back and reported what they had been through? They did not pray, "O Lord, save us from our enemies, our trials; make us sure of heaven when we die." No. This was their prayer: "And now, Lord, now, grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy servant Jesus."

What we need just now, all through the church, is a true "apostolic succession." Not any mere passing on of prestige and authority to ecclesiastical leaders through some outward act, but the awakening in all the people of Christ of the spirit that was in that early church, the spirit that is sure of one thing above all else: that Jesus—his words, his example, his present leadership—is just what the world needs and must have if it is to be saved; and that, poor and weak though we are, we can be and must be the "body of Christ," through which the spirit of that man Jesus may work upon the life of the world. If only every church member would be a real Christian; if every church organization, every denomination—Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and all—would be content with being part of the body of Christ, through which his spirit could work upon the life of the world, the world would be on the way out of its misery into the joy of salvation.

### *THE MAIN BUSINESS*

More and more I am driven to the conclusion that one of the chief reasons why the influence of the church is so weak and ineffectual is that so often the church feels that its main business is to build up the church—which is as baseless an assumption as would be made by men who, setting out to build a house, thought that all they need care about is how to rear a wonderful scaffolding. The church is not the building of God, it is only the scaffolding necessary for the building of the Kingdom.

The underlying reason why Christianity is so weak in its influence over the life of the world is not in our Leader but in our failure to follow him. Someone has made the observation, with regard to the final stanza of that noble hymn "The Son of God goes forth to war," that we really mean, when we sing about the apostles and martyrs, something like this:

> They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
> Through peril, toil and pain;
> O Lord, to us may grace be given,
> To follow *in a train.*

Yes, we too easily hope that, through our faith in the Lord Jesus, we may travel through life and death as by a reservation in a special train, where we can sit or even sleep in comfort, moving on steadily toward our final destination.

God forgive us for our lassitude, our easy way of taking the tremendous matter of being a Christian. Only as we follow Jesus and his disciples in brave and determined witnessing to truth and duty and world brotherhood, as Jesus shows them to us, can the creation, still groaning and travailing in pain even until now, at last be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

Do you believe that? If not, do you dare call yourself a Christian? And if you do, must you not show your faith by your works? What are you going to do about it?

# Our Homes—and God

**By GEORGE A. BUTTRICK**

*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him.*
Matt. 7:11

FROM all things in earth and heaven, which would you choose as the best sign for God? The sun, perhaps, for the sun is a source of life, and it is not strange that men have worshipped the sun; yet the sun blinds us, and cannot speak. A flower, perhaps, for God is beauty; but a flower soon withers. A cross? Yes! Then what did Jesus choose as sign for God? Fatherhood (or motherhood) and a home. The choice was not merely occasional, but reiterated and central. He taught us to pray, "Our Father." He set "a little child in the midst" as type of the Kingdom of God. He said that for any prodigal redemption is—return to home and a father's love and kindly care.

That Christ should choose the home as the sign for God is a clue to the meaning of life. It is its own theology. Why is there pain in the universe? We shall never fully know this side of death. But wise parents do not spare their children pain. They curb physical appetites, they insist on the practicing which alone makes musicians, they thrust their children into the new experience of school. In short, parents are dimly aware that adversity has its own deep revealings, and therefore deal with their children as God deals with us. Venice, it is worth remembering, was made by exiles driven into mud flats. They turned their extremity into a jewel city. Happiness cults (incidentally, there is plenty of that shallowness on both the platforms and the pulpits of New York) never fashioned a soul.

I

What has home (chosen by Jesus as a sign of God) to teach us about death? The answer is instant and clear: Would any worthy parent snuff out a child's life? Would any worthy parent say, "I have so many: one more or less does not matter"? A Negro mother in my first parish, losing one babe of triplets, remarked almost casually, "It's a pity to break the set"; but that casualness is not characteristic of human love. Recently this whole nation and other nations agonized over the fate of one child in California. Why should we make God a crueler image than man? Concerning eternal life: "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts, how much more . . ."!

What about hell and the judgment? That Jesus should choose the home as symbol of eternity throws light on that issue. At two in the morning a farmer woke me to baptize his baby, who was dying of the colic. He called up to me when I opened the window that the child would be damned if not baptized. It was no time to argue. I drove with him by sleigh across the prairie, and baptized the little one. By the way, the child instantly recovered. That comment is made without begging the question—and without yielding it. Afterwards I asked the father: "Would you damn a child because he was not christened?" That being said, this must be added: No wise parent would always shield a child from the consequence of selfishness. That kindness would not be kind; it would be ruinous indulgence. All right; we must say that there ought to be a judgment both here and hereafter. The fact that God is Father and his world a home does not make him a sentimental great-aunt. Any wise home has its rigors, but is still home.

Glib folk, who have hardly begun to think, may tell you that "it does not matter what a man believes." Oh, no? It did not matter that Hitler believed in blood and race, or that Karl Marx believed that the class struggle is the central issue in our world, or that many Americans believe that success is measured in cash and in salutations in the clubs? It does not matter? A man's faith determines at long last both his intellectual theory and his practical conduct. Jesus believed, with immense daring, that a worthy home is the best symbol of God. That fact has bearing on a man's faith.

II

The symbol is a clue also to the strategy of life. An explorer establishes a camp from which he subdues the surrounding wilderness—a "little America" like that which Admiral Byrd set in the Antarctic. Then what is the focus, or rather the point of radiation, from which the alien world is subdued into the Kingdom of God? Some would say "an army"—which is like contending that a slum area would be redeemed if one gang became supreme. Brute force, even when completely victorious, always splinters into competing factions, and the original problem returns. Some would say "a world government," and that indeed is plainly needed; but how to change human nature to produce it, and how to save it from bureaucracy and worse politics when

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produced, are questions rarely asked and still less frequently answered. What *is* the creative center of our world? Suppose it were the home! Our neglect of home (some caustic mind has defined home as the place we go to from the garage) would then be the dominant tragedy of our time.

Consider certain plain facts about a home. Children are (or ought to be) the fruit of the rapture of love. Yet they come through discomfort and pain—for the mother by throes of childbirth, for the father by all the anxieties that beset the breadwinner in this uncertain world. Thus children become precious. Do not ask why: God has so made us. Many a father has been saved from folly by saying to himself, "I must not shame my children." Many a mother has become a tigress in courage to defend her own. It is fairly certain that any state system of raising children will break, sooner rather than later, on the prime fact that pain and love make the family a unit by nature, and probably (aside from the church) earth's most enduring loyalty.

Consider again how wisdom is nourished in a home. There are three generations—children, parents and grandparents. Thus there can be a bequest of experience from older to younger. Stress that fact: parents have learned something about food, and they pass along the information to their children. Have they learned nothing of God? That food they should also supply. They should not "sell out" to the nonsense of letting a child choose his own religion at the age of twenty-one. Nobody has his own religion: God is one God. No religion can be just chosen: it is not a necktie, but the main artery of a man's neck. So in a home there can be, and should be, a bequest of experience (not with coercion but in love) from older to younger. At the same time there should be the gift of venture, a reminder that the world is in continuous change, from the younger to the older. Each should learn from the other, and each should teach. Robert Louis Stevenson found the answer to the remark, falsely regarded as superlative wisdom, "My dear young man, I used to think that when I was your age." The answer was, "My dear old man, I shall probably think that when I am your age." The home compasses the generations, and therefore is able to move in pondered advance.

Thus the cruciality of the home. It should set its stamp on the world. It should determine cities, it, the home, not business. Noise abatement? Of course! Better housing? A prime object! Main arteries that leave neighborhoods undisturbed? Yes! The control of advertising so that children look at something worthy, and the control of newspapers so that filth and blood shall not be spread on the public page? Yes, the day is too long delayed. So the home should determine business (that must become a home), government (the Trusteeship Council is a splendid portent), penology factory systems and education; for the home is the sign of God.

Do I need to add that the home is the best thing any man or woman can build? Perhaps God will ask us hereafter, when we tell him that we think we did fairly well in building a successful business or a successful church, "But what about your home?"

> All up and down the whole creation
> Sadly I roam,
> Still longing for the old plantation,
> And for the old folks at home.

The lines are far more than a moving memoir of Negro life. We shall "roam sadly up and down the whole creation" without the solace and strength that come only from a home.

III

That Jesus should choose the home as a symbol for God is our condemnation, for homes are broken by quarreling and death, and even the best home fails all who live in it. This fact Jesus recognized even while he chose the symbol: "If ye then, being evil . . ." You and I must inquire therefore about the redemption of the home. Modern psychology has taught us the tragic consequences of our failure. You know the terminology: mother domination, hatred of brother, overindulgence to the spoiling of the child, parental neglect. A famous high school principal once remarked that 80 per cent of parents are liabilities. When challenged he said, "I was wrong: I should have said 90 per cent." Counselors and ministers alike must ask: What about your home? There again and again the trouble begins. If there is no redemption for the home all homes, and thus all men and women, are lost.

Stress that fact, for young men and women in the flush of marriage ardently believe that they can live in terms of faith on their mutual devotion. A home cannot thus live, any more than a man could live by eating his own fingers. If marriage could thus endure it would become selfish, grotesquely capsuled within itself, and would therefore be doomed. Besides, death comes to break every home—unless it is held and redeemed in a wider and deeper love. But Christ, the Homeless Man, died for homes as well as for people. He gathered into his suffering love the sins of home, and thus cleansed them. He had no children of the flesh that he might have many children of the spirit. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him"—even the forgiveness of sins and the grace of eternal life, through the gift of his Son.

"To them that ask him": most homes do not ask, for in most homes family worship has disappeared. That tragedy might be moderated if the people within the home prayed as individuals, but individual prayer also is largely forgotten. You have noticed the antenna of a television set: it stands on the roof top strangely like the sign of the cross. If there were such a sign that prayers are offered in the house, on how many roofs (or how few) would the sign of the cross appear? Believe me, I do not speak in condemnation: every man is a sinner, and no man has the right to condemn his brethren, even if he has the inclination. I do not have even the inclination. But I would beg you (for I have no weapon but a plea and a prayer—a plea to you and a prayer to God): Be among them "that ask him"! The blunders

of home may thus be avoided in large measure, and those that cannot be avoided can be redeemed. "Ask him" in grace at meals, in nightly and morning prayer, in grace of Sabbath worship. Robert Frost says in a pathetic line:

> Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
> They have to take you in.

There is no "have to" in God's heart. He waits to welcome. "While he was yet a great way off" his father saw the prodigal, and the father ran "and fell on his neck, and kissed him." This, only this, is the redemption of home.

IV

You remember the staunch and lovely words usually recited at the service of the sacrament in this church: "I bow my knees unto the Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named . . ." He is the true home. Hotels advertise: "Your home away from home." Amazing nerve! Nothing is less like a home than a hotel. Perhaps there would have been no hotels if homes had not become pagan, and thus forgotten their obligation of hospitality. God is our home, away from home, and within the blunders of our home, and when earth and home are lost in death.

> This be the verse you grave for me:
> Here he lies where he longed to be;
> Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
> And the hunter home from the hill.

Thus church and home are forever linked, the church being the earthly prophecy and foretaste of that eternal home in which all true earthly homes are held. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him."

# Hope for the Handicapped

**By CLOVIS G. CHAPPELL**

*So the last shall be first, and the first last.* Matt. 20:16

THIS is the spearpoint of the gripping story that Jesus has just told. Of course, he does not mean that every man who is first is going to be last, nor that every man who is last is to be first. He only means that this sometimes happens. Or, as he puts it at the beginning of the story, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

There is little doubt that every man present when Jesus told this unique story listened to it with keenest interest and attention. Some were doubtless shocked by the seeming unfairness of it. Others who were handicapped and were coming close to the sunset without much to show for their day listened eagerly because it brought a gleam of hope. Perhaps these felt that it was far too good to be true, but in spite of this fact, it made their gloomy day a bit brighter.

### *AN ECCENTRIC LANDLORD*

Look at the story. It tells of an eccentric landlord who hired laborers for his vineyard and paid them off in a very surprising fashion. It is striking also that this landlord hired any man who was willing to work, regardless of the lateness of the hour.

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Look first at the laborers. They fall naturally into three groups. There were those sons of good fortune who succeeded in making contact with an employer in the early morning. These men naturally had bargaining powers that their belated fellows did not have. They could say to the owner of the vineyard, "What will you pay for a day's work?" When he answered, "I will pay each of you a dollar a day," that was satisfactory. Having thus reached an agreement, these men went into the vineyard for a full day's work.

The second group was made up of those who were hired at nine, twelve and three o'clock. These did not have the same bargaining powers as their more fortunate fellows who found employment at the beginning of the day. Their employer offered them no fixed wage; he only pledged himself to give them a square deal. Therefore they went into the vineyard trusting this promise: "Whatsoever is right, I will pay you."

The third group of laborers, and the one that holds the center of the stage, is made up of those hired about five o'clock. When the landlord went out at this late hour and found these still without work, he questioned them, "Why stand ye here all the day idle or workless?" In reply these depressed and discouraged men gave an honest answer: "We are workless because nobody has hired us. Our idleness is not our fault, but our misfortune." Then said the landlord, "Go ye also into the vineyard." He gave them no promise of reward, only a command. It speaks volumes, therefore, for their eagerness that they took this, doubtless their first opportunity. They hurried to earn even the pittance that they were sure would be paid them for working only one-twelfth of a day.

### *THE PAY-OFF*

Then, one hour later, came the payoff. Those who had come last into the vineyard were paid first. That

is what got this employer into trouble. If he had only paid the full-time men first, they would have gone home without knowing of the good fortune of the late-comers. But he paid the five o'clock men first. Not only so, but to their great joy he paid them a full day's wages. What a burden that lifted! No child emptying his full stocking on Christmas morning could find greater gladness than these found in the amazing generosity of their employer.

Naturally, such generosity awakened the expectations of the others. This was especially true of those who had worked for twelve full hours. They knew that if their employer were thus generous to them they would receive wages not for one day, but for twelve. When therefore they received only that on which they had agreed, they were indignant. They appointed a spokesman who presented their cause to the landlord. What was their complaint? Not that they had been cheated, but that others had been rewarded beyond their deserts. "Thou hast made them equal unto us."

Their employer answered wisely, "I do ye no wrong." Surely he was perfectly right. You cannot possibly wrong me by doing a favor to my neighbor. It would seem that in his indignation this full-time man had thrown down his dollar, saying, "If you can't pay me more than that, I won't have anything." This is indicated by the fact that his employer said, "Take up that which is thine and go thy way. I will give unto this last as unto thee." "Thus," concludes Jesus, "the last shall be first, and the first last."

### *DIFFERING STANDARDS*

It is evident from this that our Lord's standard for measuring success is different from ours. It is well to remember that Jesus is not here teaching a lesson in economics. I think there is no doubt of his keen interest in the right of men to work, and to work for an adequate wage. There is no surer sign of a sick social order than that men willing to work cannot do so. That "pursuit of happiness" guaranteed under the Constitution is impossible for the man who is without work. Yet any man who would conduct his business as did this ancient landlord would go broke. This is the case because an employee must put into the firm at least as much as he takes out, or that firm will inevitably go on the rocks.

For this reason, we tend to measure the worth of our fellows largely by the returns they make. For instance, a few years ago I stepped into the office of a newspaper to be greeted by this word that glared at me from the wall in boxcar letters: "57 rules for making a success. First—Deliver the goods! Second—It doesn't make any difference about the other 56." There you have it.

During the days of the depression I heard the head of a large chemical company make this statement: "Tomorrow when I get to my office it will be crowded by men seeking employment. But most of them I cannot use because they are inefficient. This will be the case in spite of the fact that many of them are from our best American universities. This will be true in spite of the fact that some of them are from the best universities of Germany. But there is little use for one to be educated on the Rhine unless he can bring home the bacon." "Deliver the goods," "Bring home the bacon"—that is the test.

But this story indicates that our Lord has rich rewards for those who do not, in the fullest sense, deliver the goods and bring home the bacon. These men who had worked but one hour received a full day's wage not because they had really earned that much. They were rewarded not for what they had actually accomplished, but for what they would have accomplished had it been in their power. Their employer took the will for the deed. Browning must have had this in mind when he said, "It is not what man does, but what man would do that exalts him."

The fact that these five o'clock men had been jobless all day does not mean that they had been sitting in the shade having a good time. They had been not idle, but jobless. They had not only worked but had done so under the most depressing and discouraging circumstances. They had worked by going from one market place to another in search of a job. They had worked dogged by fear—the fear that they would be rated as failures, and the still greater fear that at the close of the day they would be asked for bread that they could not give. In addition they had worked with a sense of uselessness gnawing like a rat at their self-respect. There was a certain fairness, therefore, and vast kindness, in their being paid more than they had earned.

This is constantly God's way. I am quite sure that the supreme ambition of David was to build a temple to the honor of his God. I daresay that it was because of this temple that he expected to live in the grateful hearts of his people. But while he was able to accomplish much, this dream never came true. When he reached the end of the journey, there was no temple in Jerusalem to perpetuate his memory. Therefore, he probably passed on with a deep sense of failure. But God said to him, "Whereas it was in thine heart to build me a house, thou didst well that it was in thine heart." That is, though David left no temple upon Mount Moriah, God gave him credit for such an achievement because of the temple that he had builded in his heart.

### *JESUS' WAY*

This fact explains the enthusiasm of Jesus over the gift of the poor widow. "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing." At that, Jesus sprang to his feet with cheeks aglow. He could not wait until the service was over to say to his friends, "This poor widow has cast in more than all they which have cast into the treasury." This was the case not because of what she had given with her hand, but what she had given with her heart.

This should give hope to the handicapped. It should excite expectation in the hearts of those who feel that they are coming to the end of the journey with little to show for their struggles. I have known many of this

kind. I am thinking now of a bright young chap in the Ozark mountains who felt himself called to the ministry. He labored hard on his mountain farm to accumulate enough to enter college. At last the glad day came when he was on his way to the station to take the train. But his car was wrecked. His back was broken. He was confined to his bed not simply for days and weeks and months, but for years. At last, when he emerged from his torture chamber, his hopes of entering the ministry were dead. He had to take the only job that offered, that of ferryman on the Osage river. This he did not in bitterness, but with a fine, high gallantry.

Here is a charming and high-spirited girl who had dedicated her life to the mission field. She was soon to be married to a choice young man who shared her dream, and they were going out to those distant fields together. But tragedy struck. Her older brother, who had been the stay of the family, died. Then the mother. This left an invalid father and an imbecile brother. So it became necessary for this girl to give up her dream of marriage and of working under far horizons. Life for her narrowed down to taking care of a whining invalid and a stupid brother. At last these two passed into the sunset, but by that time spring had given place to summer, and summer to late autumn. The high-spirited girl was the old maid of the village. But through it all she had been of a courageous, brave and cheerful spirit.

Now, I have an idea that the record of this young minister who was never privileged to preach a sermon, and this young woman who had to give up her dream of wifehood and of labor in the mission field, is not going to be blank. I think our gracious Lord who understands is going to say, "Whereas it was in thine heart to do these great and romantic deeds for me, thou didst well that it was in thine heart."

### *WHAT IS THE TEST?*

But what is the test of what is in our hearts?

The fact that God judges us not by what we do, but by what we would do, is often very comforting. Some may even make an opiate of it. There are those who, being handicapped, feel that they can make their contribution by cheap alibis. They satisfy themselves by telling what they would do if they could. They tell how much they would give if they were as rich as some Croesus. They tell how faithfully they would work if they had the skill of some friend. Meantime, they are doing nothing with the opportunities that are really theirs.

The test of what is in our hearts is what we do with what is in our hands. These five o'clock laborers were rewarded because they had done their best with the opportunities that were actually theirs. When their employer said, "Go also into the vineyard," they did not turn on him angrily and ask, "Why did you not employ us sooner?" Nor did they say in self-pity, "It is too late now. What is the good of one-twelfth of a day's wages anyway?" In spite of the fact that there seemed so little to be gained, they took what opportunity they had and made the best possible use of it.

I spoke just now of how God credited David with the building of the temple, though he did not build it at all except in his heart. How do we know that David really had it in his heart to build the temple? We know it because when he found that he could not build it, when he found that it would not be David's temple, instead of losing interest, he went just as far as he could toward building it. He did his best with what he had.

How do we know of the magnificent wealth that the poor widow had in her heart? Only in one say—by what she did with what was actually hers. Had she set out that morning for the temple leaving her two mites behind, she would have had much to say for herself. She could have said: "There will be many rich people at the service today who will cast in handfuls of gold. I, too, would cast in a handful of gold if I had it, but since I have only a fraction of a cent, I will not embarrass myself by giving anything." But she won immortality by giving what was actually hers.

Take the young minister who had to turn aside from the pulpit to fill the prosaic job of ferryman. What indication is there that God is going to reward him for a success greater than he seems to have achieved? Here is the answer: Shut off from the privilege of preaching from the pulpit, he preached at his task day by day. The friend who told me his story said that there were no less than seventy men living in the neighboring mountains who had been won to Christ by the personal appeal of this man who talked to them as he ferried them across the river.

### *THE BASIS OF JUDGMENT*

Here, then, is this searching and comforting fact: God judges us by what is in our hearts. But the test of what is in our hearts is what we do with that which we have in our hands. This puts us all on an equal footing. The greatly gifted have no better chance than those of meager gifts. The handicapped have the same opportunity as the highly privileged. This fact makes this test at once very searching and very comforting.

It is very searching for those who are greatly gifted. It is easy for the man of great gifts to be contented with his big returns, even when he has done far less than his best. God is not going to ask us how much we have done but how faithfully we have worked.

This is full of hope for the handicapped. I meet so many who have failed to realize their dreams. On the campus of a certain American college there is a monument to a former pupil which reads in part: "To the memory of Jim—Died in France saving the life of a comrade." Then this last in small type: "He played four years on the scrubs." What a story that tells! Of course, we honor the men who make the first team. Were I playing, I should like to become an All-American. But what of men like Jim who, failing to make first or second team, still play with the "scrubs" for long years and never grow either discouraged or sour? Beyond a doubt it was his willingness to play his best on a scrub team that helped him to play the best in later years on the field of battle. Surely such heroic souls have their reward. "So the last shall be first."

# The Appeal to Caesar

By FRANCIS J. McCONNELL

*I appeal to Caesar.* Acts 25:11

THESE are the words of Paul on trial for his life in a court at Caesarea. The Roman empire in Paul's day gave to its citizens some very remarkable privileges. If a Roman citizen was on trial in a lower court and became convinced that he was not getting justice in that court, all he had to do was of his own motion to adjourn the case against him and appeal straight to the supreme court at Rome. No police force, no judges in the inferior court, no civil official could block that appeal. Paul saw that chances were against him in Caesarea.

We have here an instance of Paul's practical good sense in taking advantage of all facts that would legitimately help him in his work for the Kingdom of God. I have known a type of perfectionist now and then who thought Paul's decision to appeal to a Roman law court as lacking in spiritual quality, that Paul ought rather to have said: "I appeal to God and not to man." Paul was not of this type. He looked upon Roman civilization as providential in that it could be used as an instrument in the hands of God. He used the Roman courts, he used the Roman roads, he used the language that the Romans spoke, all in the manner of a man of good sense.

I may remark in passing that Paul had occasion more than once to speak the language of good sense. In the church at Corinth was a group of persons who were disturbed about the question of eating meat that had been brought to the temples by the worshipers of heathen idols and then sold by the priests for what it would bring in the markets. The question was whether Christians could buy and use these meats. Some made an outcry against this as a sin. Paul said that the meat in itself was nothing, but that if eating such meat was hurting any weak brother's conscience he himself would eat no meat while the world stood. All this he would do for the weak brother. But he made it clear that he would not adopt any rules that would narrow down his contacts with men, even with heathens. He wasn't going to be taken out of the world by limiting his dealings with them too much. It is always well when we think of Paul's self-sacrifice for the weak brother to remember that Paul knew the weak brother was weak. He was willing to submit to inconveniences for the weak brother's sake but he wasn't going to yield to him too far. He told the weak brother that he didn't intend to deal only with Christians, for in that case he would have to go out of the world. Which was complete good sense.

*FRANCIS J. McCONNELL is a retired bishop of the Methodist Church. He was one of the great prophets of the social awakening which occurred in the earlier phases of the industrial revolution in America. And he remains a great prophet and preacher.*

### *PAUL'S GOOD SENSE*

Now one reason for Paul's eagerness to get a chance before the supreme court was this good sense. For what men have always looked for in a supreme court is that sense which we call wisdom. We don't always find wisdom in a supreme court, but we are more likely to find it there than in the lower.

At the risk of laying too much stress on the obvious, let me tell something I heard over fifty years ago from a noted teacher who was an authority on the working of social institutions. The lecture I heard was on the excellences and the dangers of law courts. The teacher was insisting that public opinion is to be blamed for acquiescing so readily in legal pronouncements, especially in lower courts. He told of a decision years ago in a city that voted to build a needed water reservoir. When the system was established it showed itself at once to be a failure; it wouldn't hold water. The city sued the building company and the defense was that there was nothing in the contract that called for the reservoir's holding water. That argument was intelligible enough as revealing the moral point of view of the lawyers. Now the judge in the case nearly worried himself to distraction studying decrees and finally came out with the conclusion that he would have to decide against the city on the ground that the contract should have been more carefully drawn. The case went up to a state supreme court which reversed the judge in hardly more than a sentence. The supreme court asked, "What is a reservoir for if not to hold water?"

Now think of those judges in Caesarea, or those authorities who did the judging. They were all intelligent enough after a fashion. Felix hoped for a bribe. Festus wanted to please the Jews. Agrippa made a show of his procession to the hearing of Paul. More than that, he made a joke of it; for the remark, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," can hardly be taken as anything but a jest.

To get any justice at all, Paul knew that he must move away from the Caesarea atmosphere, dominated as that was by a fiercely radical Jewish hatred. Even if Felix and Festus and Agrippa had released Paul—and they admitted among themselves that he was innocent—the Jews would have killed him if they had got a chance. His only hope was in the supreme court at Rome, and it was only the part of wisdom to go there,

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no matter what the decision there might be. The possibility of getting a chance to state the case for Christianity at all at Rome was worth all the risks and hardships to Paul, which he would have counted as of no consequence. He was the defender and advocate of Christianity and not of Paul himself. The tradition is that after perhaps two years Paul was put to death at Rome, though that is not certain. In any event he got his case stated and heard, and that was worth more than two years of any man's life. To this day Christianity shows the marks of Rome, and Paul helped to put those marks there.

My thought might be stated as "from Caesarea to Rome." I mean by that the wisdom of getting an atmosphere favorable for all in discussions of Christianity. Even if the real victory of Christianity has at last to be won in actual fighting, there is not much chance of victory if its principles have not been first mastered in the quiet resembling that of a supreme court room. Yelling crowds at Jerusalem or at Ceasarea cannot make an atmosphere even for discussing Christianity. In ordinary legal procedure it is the custom today to transfer a case from one place to another if the prejudices in the place where the trial would normally be held are so intense as to influence the thinking of judge and jury.

### *CALM ATMOSPHERE NEEDED*

It was more orderly and quiet for Paul's defense of his faith and belief at Rome than at Caesarea or Jerusalem. Now Christianity is on trial in many, many senses at the present time, both in personal experiences and in social movements. It is only common justice to ask in every such trial that there be an opportunity for a hearing at Rome, or in any calm atmosphere, before a final verdict is rendered.

Take our personal attitudes toward Christianity today. Think of the noise and hubbub in which thousands, indeed millions of men have to live and make their living at present—the rushing about, the hasty decisions which are omnipresent features of all the hours of our days. Of course it is possible to say that this is inevitable and that many causes that come out of the confusion are good at least in their results. Neverthless the atmosphere coming out of the nervous restlessness of modern living is not a worthy atmosphere for the utterance of the higher religious truths. Christianity resembles music at its loftiest in that the audience must become quiet, and all sounds except the music itself must stop. I suppose that the old-time evangelist had often to communicate his truths at the top of his voice, but that wasn't like a consideration in a courtroom but a cry of alarm. Christianity is more than a cry of alarm. What makes even such a cry effective has to come out of patient brooding in the quiet of the preacher's own soul. At least this was true of the Old Testament prophets, of John the Baptist in the desert, of Paul in his sojourn in Arabia and of Jesus himself.

Now that danger is probably what we have in mind when we talk of secularism; and much secularism is


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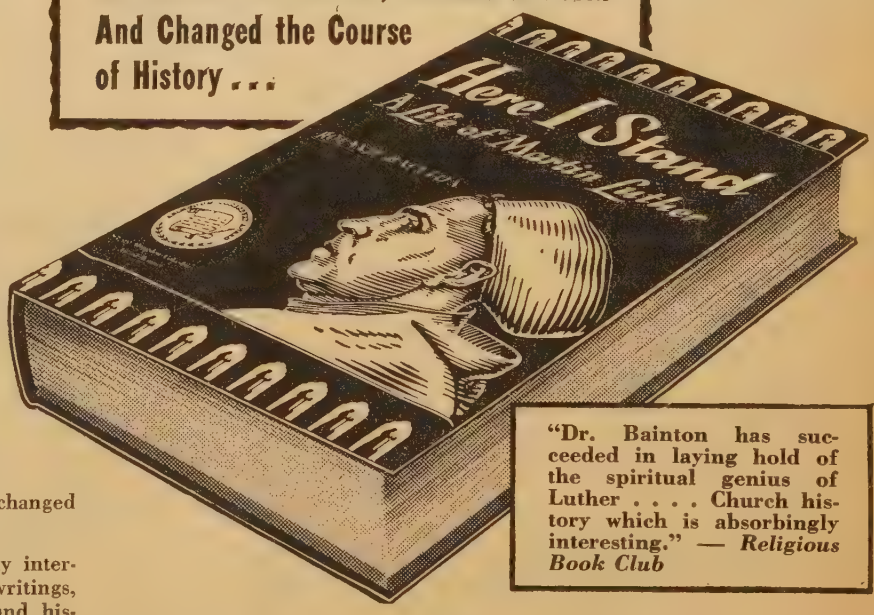


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inevitable and not the result of deliberately chosen evil. We are more or less caught in secular movements, some of which have a worldwide sweep. The trouble is that the sweep is so irresistible that it sweeps almost all religious interest out of us. Secularism in the strict sense, the secularism which makes us worldly just because we are in the world, is bad enough. But it is not as bad as worldliness, which is love of the world, which cannot see any worth except things of this world, or any motives or impulses except those of the world. This type of worldliness is likely never to have heard of any higher moral law.

### *SOME SCIENTISTS ERR*

Another type of person who doesn't seem to know that there is any higher court than that in which he himself works is a certain kind of scientist today who will not recognize even the possibility of higher values than material forces. I am not thinking of the world-shaking men of modern physics who have revolutionized our conception of the fundamental laws of material creation, but of those who will not allow any place for mental creativity in the universe. I once had a schoolmate who became an expert in physics. He had been reared in a belief in spiritual values, but after years of work in physics he found a skepticism taking possession of him, so that one day in the laboratory he had what might be called a reversed conversion. He felt an irresistible conviction that the energies of the physical world are all, that thought itself is but the resultant of the interplay of physical forces. He was too strong a man to remain bound to this conviction forever, but he remained bound for many years till he shook himself loose from the absurdities to which this committed him. He saw at last that there were human, not to say divine, values which could never be explained thus, and found his way up to a higher court. Now there is no justification for speaking of such scientists as if they were worthy of condemnation, but we need not believe that they have all the truth, or even the more essential truths concerning goodness and truth and beauty, which cannot be stated in terms of relativity or the quantum theory, mightily important as these are within their own limits. When, however, they are urged as absolute and omnipotent for the higher values, the decision has to be "No jurisdiction."

There must have been something exhilarating to Paul in the very thought of getting to Rome. For one thing, he had a capacious mind and he was eager to get a chance to state his truth before a court composed of capacious minds. He liked to think and talk in terms of facts and ideas of size. He was proud of the fact that he had been born and brought up in Tarsus—no mean city—and afterward educated at the feet of Gamaliel, a "doctor of the law" whose mind had size. He had dreams of carrying his message just about to the limit of the known world, even unto Spain. He realized that if he could get the final and highest Roman authority to pass formally upon his message, that decreee would be valid anywhere, from the Euphrates in the east to Spain in the west, from the forests of the Danube on the north to the upper Nile in the south. He could state his Christianity in universal terms —and the universal meaning of his gospel was the chief count his foes had against him. He could, if approved at Rome, proclaim his truth thousands of miles distant from Jerusalem. In fact this is what he did, no matter what happened to him personally. His epistles were calling to the Roman empire with their universal note before the Gospels got their full hearing.

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Universality is of the essence of the preaching of Paul. It is likewise of the essence of the Christianity of us of today, for which the church of today is responsible. Paul did not give himself to missionary journeys out of any merely personal ambitions. He believed that the gospel was for the whole world and for all men everywhere, that God hath made of one blood all nations of men and hath determined the periods of their existence and the bounds of their habitation, and that in God men live and move and have their being. I remember that a desperately stiff commentator on the passage in Acts which I have just quoted remarked that Paul here attempted a shrewd flattery of his Greek hearers and that thus he won no converts. To which we may well reply that after the address certain men clave to him believed, and also that Paul was not at the moment seeking converts but was stating to a Gentile audience the universality of the message of Jesus. If Paul had returned to earth at any recent meeting of the World Council of Churches he would probably have sought a place among the delegates.

If my Methodist hearers will not become too impatient I will remark that within the generation after John Wesley died he was succeeded by a leader of Methodism named Jabez Bunting. Wesley had never made a specialty of "outside" social or political interests, but in the main his work tended toward large social betterment. Bunting was a pious tyrant who had no use for anything in the way of the general uplift of society. He was almost a foe of the laboring classes. His gospel was strictly evangelistic, aiming at the building of the church solely by the conversion of individuals. He ruled Methodism for forty years. Toward the close of his presidency the Methodists felt interested in general movements for the improvement "of the people" through some social activities. President Bunting took the ground that on all social activities, especially those of labor groups, and wider popular liberties, the Methodist polity was to "stand stock still." Methodists did stand "stock still" on a platform narrowly evangelistic, declaring that the only way to transform society was by the conversion of men one at a time. England's public opinion however did not stand stock still while the air was becoming charged with intense interest in the application of Christian principle to the larger civic and political and human needs. The result was that in one five-year period the Bunting branch of Methodism lost one hundred thousand members, a loss not recovered until a wider social view, not to say a more radical one, came to power in Methodism; in a word, until the holders of Methodist authority began to share in a genuinely supreme spiritual and social insight.

I don't wish to overwork the suggestiveness of my text but I do wish to say that it is interesting to note how quickly a mind trained to think in terms of the highest moral insight comes to discern the fundamental principles of right action. Details may not always be clear, but the main path to light soon shows itself.

### *NEHEMIAH'S SELF-RESPECT*

One of the Old Testament heroes whom I greatly admire is Nehemiah, who was sent by a king to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The dwellers in Jerusalem for their own small and selfish reasons sought to talk his plans to death. They had immense faith in talk. Nehemiah always spoke as if he had lived in a realm of the higher principles. As soon as he had the work of rebuilding the walls well under way, along came Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem and asked Nehemiah to come down for a "talk it over" in the plain, seeking to discourage him in his great task. Nehemiah's reply was: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?" The trio did this four times. Then Nehemiah's friends feared that he was in danger of being killed and asked him to go into the Temple and shut the doors. Then came the reply of a lofty spirit: "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there, that, being such as I, would go into the Temple to save his life? I will not go in." When the people saw and caught what Nehemiah meant they said it was of God. It took them some time to see it. I once heard a forceful sermon preached on Nehemiah's speech on the theme, "The Preservation of Self-respect." Self-respect is likely to act instantly if one has any. When it is also respect for divine ideals it cannot be argued away by a Sanballat's committee in five meetings or fifty.

A man once called Jesus a judge, and Jesus asked him why. The reply was that he wanted to receive something from a brother's inheritance. We usually speak as if Jesus then refused to act as judge. In fact he took the judgment seat at once and his sentence was that of a high court: to grasp the right essential at once, by getting rid of covetousness.

## *TITLES AND TEXTS* — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

K. MORGAN EDWARDS, First Methodist, Glendale, Calif. "Habits We Use or Habits Which Use Us." Rom. 7:18—". . . to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Rom. 8:2—". . . the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

JOHN W. MELOY, Louisville, Kentucky, Council of Churches. "Getting to Know God." I John 5:13—"I write this that you may know that you have eternal life."

ROY E. PASLAY, JR., First Baptist, Holton, Kan. "Pilate the Puppet." Luke 23:25b—". . . but he delivered Jesus to their will."

ALLEN HACKETT, Central Union, Honolulu. "Communion Meditation." Mark 14:18-19—"Lord, is it I? . . ." John 6:20—"Be not afraid."

FRANK E. HENRY, First Congregational, Sibley, Iowa. "The Last Breakfast." John 21:9—"They see a fire of coals and fish laid thereon and bread."

# Pulpit Post

### Their Answers

SIR: Your "Thought for the Month" in the September Pulpit asks a question that every preacher must answer to the best of his satisfaction every week: "How shall the preacher address his message to a society which once believed it but believes it no more?"

First, he must realize that the people have a wistful yearning to believe the message. Second, he must have a conviction that the eternal truths are timely and they must be presented in timely forms. This means that he must preach from life situations, his message must be phrased in a biblical frame of reference, he must present profound truths in a simple and popular way, he must give the sermon freshness and spontaneity. Third, the preaching issues he chooses must be attractive to his congregation, the topics must be attention-getters, the sermon preparation and presentation must be such that people will want to come back for another message. People are disillusioned by secularism. They must be reillumined by the preacher's Christian conviction. This still can be done by "the foolishness of preaching," but not by foolish preachers.

First Christian, EARLE BARCLAY.
Benton, Ill.

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SIR: My section of the country has not yet come to the place where the message of Christ is no longer "news," but we are on our way to that unenvied place. How can we avert that disaster?

My answer centers around the preacher. A layman gave me his analysis of the preachers of our section. He said that the clergy is too far behind the laity to be effective. (This layman is conservative in the fullest Southern Baptist tradition.) In his opinion, the better thinkers and more aggressive personalities are not in our pulpits, but sit in the pew waiting for thought-provoking leadership which does not come. To preach the gospel in a society of "disillusioned indifference" I would suggest:

1. The preacher must have experienced the "good news" and proclaim with a humble sincerity those beliefs, convictions and experiences which are his own. Other people are not interested in trying that about which the preacher has no conviction.

2. The preacher must try to understand the society in which he lives. Just as he comes to conclusions about what he believes, he must do his best to understand the society in which he lives and to which he is to apply this "good news."

3. The preacher must himself practice what he preaches and thus demonstrate that his message is relevant to his society.

First Baptist, G. AVERY LEE.
Ruston, La.

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SIR: I would not oversimplify an answer to your pertinent question in September's "Thought for the Month," but I do offer this suggestion: Let us address our message to a society that once believed it but believes it no more with the challenge, "I dare you!" As I see it, our message of a living faith in Jesus Christ is a dare to act it out. Let us act ourselves into right thinking and fruitful believing!

First Methodist, ROBERT J. SMITH.
Enid, Okla.

### Prefers 'Corn' to 'Scorn'

SIR: The monthly arrival of The Pulpit is a great tonic: it always stimulates my mind and contains a wealth of homiletic material. The "Preacher Problem" page is very suggestive and helpful. But this particular page in the July issue has left a bad taste in my mouth; in my opinion this article is in very poor taste.

I heartily agree with the professor in his dislike for "tear-jerkers"; I feel exactly as he does, although—tell it not in Gath!—I found "Hunchy" rather helpful in one of my sermons not so long ago. But I must register my protest against the tone of the article. Spurgeon would probably have said that its writer must have been baptized in vinegar.

The article is not without merit for it is a warning to preachers to steer clear of scorn, superciliousness and slang. Corn is sometimes edible but scorn never is.

Georgetown Presbyterian, GEORGE HICKS.
Grand Cayman, British West Indies.

### Anent Perry Article

SIR: I have just finished reading, for the fifth time, the article "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Gospels," by Alfred Morris Perry, in the August issue. To my mind that is one of the best articles that have come to my desk in a long time. I let a young man who is entering the ministry read it and he said, "I wish I could keep that." I think it will serve as a guide to his thinking as he enters the university this fall.

You are doing a great service with The Pulpit, and I wish for it a wider circulation among the ministry.

First Methodist, HARRY E. CORBIN.
Gideon, Mo.

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SIR: Twice in his article "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Gospels" Alfred Morris Perry, New Testament professor, credits Martha with "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him," instead of Mary. Not a serious mistake at all. No more serious than for Rubinstein to have hit the same wrong note twice in the same composition. "Form criticism" apparently has awed Mr. Perry to the extent that it is immaterial who said what in the Gospel accounts.

If scholars would read the Bible as much and with as humble receptivity as they do the very fantastical and subjective theories on the reliability of the Scripture records, they would make Scripture the touchstone of genuineness rather than the critics. Furthermore, the *faux pas* of quotation and allusion would be eliminated.

First United Presbyterian, J. J. VELLENGA.
Rock Island, Ill.

### Pastoral Prayers Helpful

SIR: Congratulations to you for the all-round excellence of The Pulpit. In addition to the many other fine features of your publication, I have found your "Pastoral Prayers" particularly helpful and inspiring. I have long since come to regard the pastoral prayers as both the high point in our service of worship and also the heaviest responsibility that rests upon each one of us as ministers. Over a course of many years I have given this part of my worship service my most serious and thoughtful consideration.

Nahant Village Church, ROSMOND M. MAC DONALD.
Nahant, Mass.

### Suggestions

Sir: I have just read in "Pulpit Post" (August) the letter headed "We Asked For—and Got—It." As an example of muddle-headed criticism that strikes me as perfect. If the magazine were "The Pew" instead of "The Pulpit," its call for full-length sermons might be warranted—though I am not sure. But surely in a publication intended for preachers brevity, provided the meat is present, is most desirable. If he wishes to do it the preacher-reader ought to be able to expand to his heart's content.

I like The Pulpit as it is and expect to subscribe for it as long as I can, but it would, I think, be still more valuable if each number had but one full-length sermon, with the remainder of the sermon space devoted, not to "sermonettes" or sermon outlines, but to digests of full-length sermons comparable to the digests of full length articles with which the *Reader's Digest* has made us familiar.

First Congregational, JOHN C. PRYOR.
Weeping Water, Neb.

# The Pastor's Devotional Life

By J. MANNING POTTS

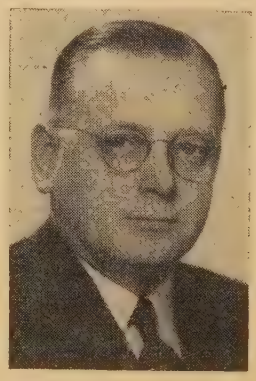
THE PREACHER who sets out to cultivate his devotional life sets out on a hard job and a lifetime proposition. But though hard, it is rewarding. The going will be difficult. If one doubts this, let him read the lives and the writings of the saints. Listen to Augustine, study Brother Lawrence, explore *The Imitation of Christ,* sit down with the writings of any of the mystics, and almost immediately you are impressed with the daily difficulties they met on the rocky road leading to sainthood.

For instance, Augustine says: "My evil sorrows strive with my good joys; and on which side is the victory, I know not. Woe is me! Lord, have pity on me! Woe is me! Lo, I hide not my wounds; thou art the physician, I the sick; thou merciful, I miserable." Listen to the writer of *The Imitation of Christ*: "O Lord, let that become possible to me by thy grace, which by nature seems impossible to me. Thou knowest that I am able to suffer but little, and that I am quickly cast down, when a slight adversity ariseth." Or again to Brother Lawrence: "Thus by rising after my falls, and by frequently renewed acts of faith and love, I am come to a state wherein it would be as difficult for me not to think of God as it was at first to accustom myself to it."

We admire the spiritual vision from afar. We have a pious wish that we may attain the goal but we are unwilling to pay the price, whether because of laziness or ineptitude, lack of desire or resolution, or general inability to face the requirements. Because of this failure we miss the mark of the prize of the high calling of God as it relates to going on to perfection or sainthood. Many men in sheer desperation view the Promised Land from afar and, consumed with the busy-ness of the day, never dare to get out in the waters of Jordan for fear of being drowned. But they know all the while that that way is the Promised Land. They know that down that road is something which has saving power in it even though they may become engulfed in the swelling of Jordan. Eventually if they struggle they are saved by that power from drowning and come over into the land of Canaan. But they are unwilling to pay the price.

### SOME CATCH THE VISION

On the other hand, some men do catch the vision and follow the gleam, and their ministries are the richer for their daily glimpses of heaven. Their lives reflect the light and their personalities radiate the warmth of these experiences. With Paul they can say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." But if one is to cultivate some measure of this Christian sainthood experience, a beginning must be made somewhere. Many have begun and are on the way. But many have never frankly faced the implications of developing personal



devotional life. The rather natural temptation of the preacher is to stay near the shore of his flock's vacuity of holiness and use this as a reason for not venturing out himself into the deeps of spiritual experience.

A church janitor who was tired of washing the dishes after the church suppers said that his job was a great deal harder because the ladies were so "disencouraging." In the modern machinery of the church there is not too much to encourage devotional discipline. But whatever there is of help brings rewards if one uses it as a means of grace. When the preacher makes up his mind to use these means of grace as helps to Christian experience, when he embarks on this way, he will improve his soul. At the same time his mind will be sharpened, and spiritual power will radiate from him to his home, to his flock, to the chance stranger within his gates. People will see in him the light of sainthood. And it can be said of him that, like the saint of the boy's definition, he is a person that the light shines through. The apostle wrote to the "saints" which were at Ephesus and the "saints" which were at Philippi. He was not talking to canonized persons but to honest-to-goodness, living, everyday church people who were called to be like Christ.

When a man makes up his mind to cultivate his devotional life by spiritual exercise, when he determines that nothing shall interfere with this, when he begins to discipline himself and resolves that it shall not be true of him that, while he was busy here and there, it was gone—then he starts out on a great journey. It is a continuous journey, not one beginning today and ending tomorrow. Thus a man decides to *begin* to cultivate his prayer life, his Bible study, his ministry of silence and meditation. He begins to have a desire to cultivate the fellowship of the saints. He makes up his mind that the Bible, the writers of the devotional classics, the religious poets, the hymnwriters, and all who have come to some measure of depth of religious experience, shall speak to him. He knows they have a message for him. Prayer then becomes not so much a matter of telling God as of God revealing himself. His religious and spiritual sights are centered differently and he finds God speaking to him, frequently at the most unexpected moments and with depths of unexpected reality. Reading the Bible becomes not simply a matter of looking for texts for Sunday's sermon but of entering a storehouse of great religious and devotional treasure. He finds in it pearls of great price for his own soul.

### MINISTRY OF SILENCE

The ministry of silence plays a large part in the discipline. You go to a Quaker meeting and sit for half an hour or an hour perfectly silent and meditative. It is remarkable what will come to you if you put your mind upon God for that length of time. The clanging gongs and blatant cymbals, the unmusical so-called musical instruments, the shrieking sirens and all the other things that produce modern noise make little contribution, if any, to the ministry of silence. Indeed they destroy its eloquence—for silence has its eloquence, and this age needs to cultivate it. It has been said that the

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verse of Scripture, "Be still and know that I am God," has a deeper meaning than just being quiet, being still; it really means, "Give in, and know that I am God." This certainly has a lesson for the minister of today, involved as he is in the multitudinous administration of the parish and the many duties which surround him with each new morning. We need to give in, and by so doing cultivate in the silent moments the possibilities there are in private communion with God. When we do, God will speak to us, and there will be a reservoir of spiritual bread for us to break as we visit and come in contact with our flocks during the day. The parishioner will recognize that we have been with God.

But we have been speaking about prayer life, the use of the Bible, devotional helps, and the great devotional classics. This writer is not one of those who claims that there is today less of family worship and of Bible reading and of prayer than there was years ago. We hear this reproach on every hand. To be sure, some people have given up family devotions, but many continue and large numbers have started anew. Most of our statements in this connection are guesswork. We have very little means of knowing just what our forefathers did. It is a matter of record that in the state of Virginia about 1800 only 1 per cent of the population belonged to any church. With the great increase in church members today, it is reasonable to suppose that more people hold daily devotions. We do know that there are millions of people now in the world who take time out for communion with God, who work seriously at trying to cultivate their individual and family devotional life.

### *THE PEOPLE FOLLOW THE PASTOR*

Many people have begun because the pastor of some church has been emphasizing the importance of the devotional life. It has been no minor thing with him. He has been making it important in season and out of season. It can be said that rarely will a congregation be found where there is much spiritual cultivation when the pastor himself is not leading in it. His use of devotional materials, his references to them and emphases on them will have more influence than anything else on their use among his congregation. The church bulletins which pass over the desk of any editor reveal clearly what the pastors emphasize week after week. Over and over one finds emphases on Bible reading, prayer, devotional periodicals and family worship. The bulletins contain prayers for use in the home and stress the use of a daily devotional guide. All this pays dividends. It pays dividends in enriched homes. It pays dividends in people who are won to Christ. It pays dividends in starting out young couples in the Christian way. It sets a pattern and builds the foundations upon which successful home life is constructed.

### *SPIRITUAL RESERVOIRS*

I recently visited two of the oldest Episcopal churches in America, places of historical interest. In each of them I noted that the literature racks in the vestibule offered devotional leaflets and guides. This is characteristic of many churches across the country today. The local church not only suggests devotional helps; it provides them. It teaches the people to cultivate their souls. As a rule, the impetus for such cultivation radiates from the pulpit. The pastor is responsible. He is the one who continually provides suggestions. The people look up to the shepherd and are fed because of his own devotional life. His spirit is contagious, and many in the congregation become like him. These in turn influence others in the deepening of their devotional lives, and so the influence goes on. Thus when the minister visits a home where they have begun family devotions he is paid great dividends as he realizes that his example has been an inspiration.

Recently I saw some of the lakes of New York state, reservoirs for the water supply of the city of New York. They were almost dry; only a trickle of water was passing through them. Powerless lakes they were. God knows we need spiritual reservoirs in a day like this. Our people know whether we have them or not. They distinguish between vacuous outpourings of words and radiant souls.

There must be water in the spring if the spring is to prove efficacious. There must be fire in the fireplace if there is to be warmth in our houses. We do not reach the state of spiritual richness accidentally; no man does. But we do grow in grace if we are willing to pay the price. We can ourselves drink of the water of life and then give forth that which, if a man drinks of it, he shall never thirst. We send out light to a troubled and darkened universe. We can give the bread of life to those who hunger. But none of these comes save through personal devotions and the practice of the presence of god. That way is the way of poise and power and Christian grace, which come not of man but of God.

# Communion Means Sharing

**By STANLEY I. STUBER**

CHRISTIANS throughout the world will gather on the first Sunday in October for communion. In little chapels and great cathedrals, in hundreds of city churches and thousands of rural meeting places, Christians of all lands, colors, classes, and races will unite at the communion table. Here indeed will be a vast international fellowship breaking over all man-made barriers. Here will be faith and worship lifted to universal levels. But is this enough? Communion certainly must be followed by Christian deeds if it is to resemble completely the model established by the early church.

### *What Sall We Do?*

What, for example, are we going to do to counteract the type of propaganda which the Communists are spreading throughout the world? By means of the world mission enterprise the churches have done much to prove that Christians want to save bodies as well as souls. Through Church World Service they have rendered an outstanding service both in Europe and in the Far East. But past achievements, however great, do not answer the cries of the needy. What are we doing for world relief and interchurch aid today? And what do we intend to do in the weeks and months just ahead? Certainly we must provide for Church World Service, our very own organization through which we work cooperatively, sufficient financial support to complete with honor its 1950 overseas undertakings.

### *Funds Running Low*

To put it bluntly, Church World Service does not have as of the moment enough funds, or sufficient pledges, to carry through an approved minimum program for the remainder of this year.

We cannot believe that the Christian people of this great and wealthy nation will deliberately close their eyes to the continuing needs of the world. Nor do we believe that they intend to fail in any way their own relief agency. They have put too much into Church World Service and think too highly of it to permit any failure, because of financial inadequacies, in meeting the assurances we have given to our brethren overseas. It can well be that our people are, at the present

*(Continued on page 239)*

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*STANLEY I. STUBER is director of promotion for Church World Service. He also serves as an editorial associate on the* Twentieth Century Quarterly.

# Pulpit Paragraphs

**Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit**

### ● *The Bow in The Cloud*

"AND God said, This is the token of the covenant between me and you" (Gen. 9:12). Every cloud has a silver lining. All our storms end with a bow of promise, if we will. The black vault that presses us down to earth, crushing and almost destroying us, is always held back by this overarching rainbow of hope. Suffering and trial form part of every life. It is only when we open our eyes to God's presence and read in his Word of the immortal hope that we can believe that all is not evil in this world, so often storm-swept. Let us learn to look for proofs of God's love in earth's garments of grief, reflected from falling tears, tinting even the shadow of death with faith's brighter hues.

Yet hope is not born of sorrow. It comes from God. It is he who smiles on us through our tears. Let us lift our heads even in our distress and look bravely through the pain and bitter loss. Then will we see God's glorious promise of the future overarching the gloom of the present. Remember, the rainbow does not begin in the cloud; its home is in the sun behind us. The beauty of the bow comes to our eyes only when the sunbeams are broken by the raindrops. So the white light of God's love strikes the teardrops of our sorrow and is rent asunder, revealing the sevenfold flower of beauty and promise.

If you would see the glory of the bow in the cloud you must face the storm, not the sun. Do not look away from your trial. Do not seek to escape by forgetting. Do not drown bitter memories by sinking into the mire of sensualism, surfeiting the body and starving the soul. Do not even seek to lose the sad memory of the past by facing the new day with God—not yet. If you do, you will miss the rainbow.

Noah's rainbow promised him present and immediate joys—"seedtime and harvest, summer and winter." God's promises are for us in this world as well as in another. You, like Noah, have been engaged with God for many years, building an ark of safety against the evil day when sin should overwhelm, seeking to tear your children from your heart. Then the flood came! You were working by the waterside at your Winnipeg or Portland or Eddyville. One day you looked to see all the lowlands of your life inundated. You watched all your lesser interests, by the river or the sea, destroyed—crops, warehouses, factories, wharves. You were forced back to the hilltop where you had builded your home—the ark of your covenant. That, at least, is safe from the reach of the angry waters.

You lost your fortune by an unwise speculation or a careless life; you lost your health through folly or misfortune; you lost your friends by your selfishness, or your position through another's enmity. You have lost much, but you have left the home on the hill. You and your children are safe, as was Noah. On those higher levels where you have been living through the years, even though busy below with temporal things, in that life of the spirit you now find supreme joy and satisfaction, now while the flood of evil fortune has carried away those prized possessions of youth—health, property, honors. You are content, and in the simplicity that is in Christ you await that other flood whose farther side is heaven, whose crossing will be welcome.—*Frank E. Henry, Congregational Church, Eddyville, Iowa.*

### ● *The Beauty of the Mysterious*

ALBERT EINSTEIN, now an old man, after a life of new discoveries still seeks after the hidden mystery of God. A mind that can delve into the secrets of the atom tells us that the most beautiful thing is the mysterious. These are his exact words:

"The most beautiful thing that we can experience is the mysterious. It is a source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed. The insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us, really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which all our full faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is at the inner center of religiousness."—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

### ● *'Holes in My Heart'*

"THE Word of God must not only be in the language and the hands of people, but also in their hearts," Dr. Eugene Nida, secretary for translations of the American Bible Society, has said. He tells the story of a little Luba-Lulua lad in the central Congo who sat listening with fixed gaze as the missionary read from the Scriptures. As soon as the service was finished, this small schoolboy hastened to the missionary and asked, "Oh, sir, may I have that book, so that I may read it to the people of my village off in the forest? For those words made holes in my heart."—*American Bible Society*

### ● *One Vote Is Important*

IF MORE of the intelligent, informed and patriotic people in this country fully realized their public responsibility and voted right, just voted at every election, I believe that this country would be blessed wtih efficient and incorruptible government. Most people say, "What am I? Who am I? Little me. I count for little. My vote means nothing." Listen to this, which was contained in a circular put out by some Arlington, Va., community organization, entitled "Your Vote Is Important":

"Do you know that one vote elected Thomas Jefferson President? One vote admitted Texas, California, Washington and Oregon to statehood? One vote beheaded Charles I of England? One vote made France a republic in 1875 and ended it in 1940? One vote saved the Selective Service act in 1941?"

Of course one vote is important.—*Bradshaw Mintener, Vice-President and General Counsel, Pillsbury Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.*

### ● *Christian Churches Help D.P.'s*

FEW people realize the extent to which the Christian churches of the world have influenced international public opinion and action on behalf of displaced persons and other refugees. And, spurred by the Christian consciences of citizens of many nations, one of the greatest mass migrations of individuals in human history is now nearing completion.

Members of Christian churches provided the initial pressure which prompted the emergence and subsequent workings of the International Refugee Organization, specialized agency of the United Nations, charged with resettlement and repatriation of 1.5 million D.P.'s created by World War II. (Displaced persons comprise only one-tenth of a total of 12 million refugees crowded into western Europe.)

With active worldwide aid and cooperation from Christian churches and other voluntary agencies, IRO had enabled more than 739,000 former D.P.'s to find new homes and jobs in

more than a dozen new lands by spring 1950, nearly three years after it first began its work as an international humanitarian agency.

But without the spiritual, moral and financial encouragement of Christian churches, the plight of 1,473,300-odd displaced persons would perhaps still remain unnoticed and unaided by the rest of the world.—*James A. Ryberg, Dept. of Interchurch Aid and Service to Refugees, World Council of Churches.*

### ● *'Time Stays. We Go.'*

WE often wish that we had more to say in regard to time, but it does not heed our mortal voice. Many have seen the war memorial on the Midway in Chicago, sculptured by Lorado Taft. It is the story of the march of heroes and the unfolding drama of life. Underneath there is the sentence: "Time goes, you say? Ah, no! Time stays. We go." And time does go and the passing events of life take us on, and seemingly more rapidly, as we gather years in the journey of life.—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul's Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

### ● *The Folly of Feeling Important*

T. S. ELIOT, whose new play, "The Cocktail Party," is enjoying some success on the Broadway stage, observes: "Half of the harm done in this world is due to people who want to feel important. They don't mean to do harm, but the harm does not interest them; or they do not see it, or they justify it because they are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves."—*Robert Burdette Rose, Baptist Temple, Charleston, W. Va.*

### ● *Laymen Have Responsibilities*

I WAS attracted recently to an article published by Dr. Russell J. Humbert, pastor of the First Methodist Church of Youngstown, Ohio, in which he wrote: "The greatest and most effective minister in any American community is not necessarily found at the high altars of the church. The most telling ministry is now functioning in and through the lives of those who make up the membership of the church, the laity." Laymen are vital today in the work of the church because of what they are. The people, we, the people, are the church. The greatest minister in our city or community is the layman who is doing all his work as a Christian churchman.

Basically, the laymen are the church because of that spiritual and internal combustion which causes a man to be driven and motivated by Christian ideals. Laymen can and should strengthen the social arms of the church, the civic arms of the church and the political arms of the church.—*Bradshaw Mintener, Vice-President and General Counsel, Pillsbury Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.*

### ● *Weaving Life's Tapestry*

MANY who have no time to waste on patterns, and who lack patience, try their hand at weaving tapestry. Unskilled and awkward as they are, their results are disappointing. In life too we find such people. Every life, like every tapestry, must have a pattern. One reason the tapestry weaver must have a pattern is that he works on the wrong side. He cannot see the completed figures because the warp hides them from his view. Life is like that too. The only thing the weaver can do is to follow the pattern. Only so can we live a worthwhile life. The full influence of our character and the full meaning of life are hidden from us. Only God sees the right side of life's tapestry. Reverse-side weaving is most difficult, but necessary. It is also necessary in life. No one can weave in sacrifice and trust and self-denial and love and duty and loyalty from the right side of the tapestry of life. We must learn to weave and live by faith in the pattern.—*O. W. Matzke, Evangelical United Brethren, Milford, Neb.*

## COMMUNION

*(Continued from page 237)*

time, uninformed or even misinformed concerning the continuing relief and interchurch aid needs of 1950. Perhaps the indirect method of support—that is, through denominational national offices—makes the appeals seem remote and not at all personal. Or it may even be that pastors, so busy with other important matters, have not been able to keep their congregations fully aware of this uncompleted task.

Whatever may be the "bottleneck," all local churches will be given the opportunity to break it wide open on Sunday October 1, and during the Thanksgiving season.

*World Communion and Thanksgiving*

To round out its program of helpfulness, Church World Service is making two appeals this fall for the program already approved by twenty-three denominations. The first will be on World Communion Sunday and the other on Thanksgiving Day. Although this has been the practice in former years, an appeal this year, due to continuing needs and new emergencies, is even more urgent. Pastors, councils of churches, ministerial associations are being asked once again to further this appeal so that Church World Service can continue to represent the churches as they desire, on a global scale.

On World Communion Sunday the appeal will be for the entire program of Church World Service and on Thanksgiving the emphasis will be upon displaced persons.

Communion includes the principle of sharing, of giving, of making generous contributions. It means sharing our best thoughts and desires with God, and it also means dedicating some of our God-given blessings to the uses of our brothers across the seas who are victims of cruel circumstances far beyond their control. The early Christians demonstrated many different times that they cared enough for their needy and suffering brethren to make real sacrifices for them. This practice of sharing, growing out of the spiritual motivation of communion, was a distinguishing mark of these early disciples.

Has the church today lost this essential characteristic of the followers of Christ? We are confident that it has not. The support of world missions proves that. We have faith to believe that knowing the continuing emergency relief and interchurch aid needs they will again respond generously as they have done in the past. Christians are a peculiar people—they love and help those whom they have not seen, and they do it gladly, because we are all one in Christ!

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